

Site Selection for Strategic Petroleum Reserve Expansion

The Environmental Review Process



U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Strategic Petroleum Reserve

December 2005

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for major Federal actions that may significantly affect the quality of the environment. The NEPA process is intended to assist Federal agencies and the public in identifying and assessing the potential environmental consequences of a proposed action and alternatives before making a decision on a proposed action. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has determined that the expansion of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) may have a significant impact upon the environment and is considered a major Federal action. DOE will complete the following steps in preparing the EIS and making a decision on the proposed action:

Notice and Scoping: DOE issued a Notice of Intent (NOI) on the proposed expansion of the SPR on September 1st, 2005 in the Federal Register (70 FR 52088). On September 18, 2005, DOE published another notice in the Federal Register (70 FR 56649) to extend the comment period by two weeks, until October 28, 2005, due to the impacts of Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast region. The scoping comment period was re-opened on November 18, 2005 to account for a new site that was added for consideration (70 FR 706000). The new scoping comment period will close on December 19, 2005. During the scoping process, the public is invited to comment directly to DOE on the scope of the EIS. This helps DOE determine the alternatives, issues, and environmental impacts to analyze in the EIS.

EIS Preparation: DOE will prepare the EIS using independent analysis, site inspections, review of scoping period comments, and consultations with Federal, state, and local agencies and Native American tribes.

Draft EIS: The Draft EIS will describe, analyze, and compare the potential environmental impacts of the alternatives and provide additional information on the methodologies and assumptions used for the analyses. If one or more preferred alternatives exist at this stage in the NEPA process, DOE will identify them in the Draft EIS. DOE expects the Draft EIS to be available in early spring 2006. Once the Draft EIS is issued, NEPA provides a minimum of 45 days for Federal agencies, state and local governments, Native American tribes, and the public to submit comments. The public comment period begins upon publication of a Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft EIS in the Federal Register. DOE will announce the availability on the SPR website (www.fe.doe.gov) and through public notification. Meetings may be held during the comment period to facilitate submission of comments by Federal agencies, state and local governments, and the public. DOE will consider public comments in preparing the Final EIS. If you would like to receive notification of the Draft EIS availability, please provide your address on the sign-in sheet at this meeting or contact Don Silawsky.

Final EIS: The Final EIS will be published and distributed during the summer of 2006. The Final EIS will reflect consideration of all comments received during the public comment period, contain DOE's responses to those comments, and if needed, provide revised Draft EIS text based upon comments received. The Final EIS will identify DOE's preferred alternative(s) if they were not identified in the Draft EIS. The release of the Final EIS will be announced by publishing an NOA in the Federal Register and through public notification.

Record of Decision: Once the Final EIS is published, a minimum 30-day no-action period is required before DOE can issue a Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD will notify the public of the alternative that DOE has selected and the reasons for that decision. The EIS analysis is considered in the decision-making process, which may also consider other factors such as costs, technical feasibility, DOE's statutory mission, and/or national objectives. The Energy Policy Act of 2005, enacted on August 8, 2005, mandates DOE to select sites necessary for SPR expansion no later than one year after enactment.

Submit Comments

You are invited to comment on these potential impacts and/or identify additional impacts not on this list as part of the public process to define the scope and content of the EIS. Additionally, you will be invited to comment on the Draft EIS, and DOE will consider those comments in preparing the Final EIS. To receive a copy of the Draft EIS when it is issued, please contact **Donald Silawsky** (see below).

All scoping period comments must be received or postmarked by:

Monday, December 19, 2005.

Envelopes and the subject line of faxes or e-mails should be labeled: "Scoping for the SPR EIS." Please note that, due to anthrax screening, incoming letters and packages to DOE may be delayed by 7-10 days.

Send to:

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Potential Environmental Impacts

Under NEPA, the term "environment" encompasses the natural and physical environment (air, water, wildlife, and geology) as well as people's relationship with that environment (health and safety, cultural resources, noise, and aesthetics). The following issues may be associated with the proposed expansion of the SPR. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive and it is not a predetermination of potential impacts. It is presented to facilitate public comment on the planned scope and content of the EIS.

Air Quality: The effects of construction and operation of the proposed new SPR facilities and expansion at existing SPR sites on local and regional air quality.

Water Resources: The effects of construction (e.g., construction in water bodies and brine disposal) and operation (e.g., raw water intake and potential spills) on the quantity and quality of local and regional marine, freshwater, and groundwater systems.

Ecological Resources: The effects of construction on terrestrial and aquatic plants and animals, including state and Federally listed threatened and endangered species and other protected resources (e.g., wetlands and essential fish habitat).

Land Use: The effects on existing or planned land uses on or adjacent to the proposed new sites or expansion sites.

Geological and Soil Resources: The effects on the local geology and soils such as halokinesis or cavern "creep" and subsidence.

Public Health and Safety: The effects of construction and operation on public health and safety, including potential incidental spills and releases.

Socioeconomics: The effects of a potential influx of workers and the potential increase in demand for local services interrelated with natural or physical environmental effects.

Cultural Resources: The effects on historical, archaeological, and culturally important sites.

Environmental Justice: The potential for disproportionate adverse effects on low-income or minority populations.

For More Information

SPR Environmental Impact Statement Status

http://www.fe.doe.gov/programs/reserves/SPR_Expansion_EIS/expansion_eis.html

For further information regarding the DOE NEPA process, please contact:

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1000 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20585-0119;
telephone: (202) 586-4600; fax: (202) 586-7031; or leave a toll-free message at 1-800-472-2756.